



LHVA grants aid many projects

Funding varies from cultural events to "green" preservation

By Natalie Gelb Solfanelli

LHVA works with partners to tell the Lackawanna Heritage Valley's story using creative projects and programs that are centered on the themes of Land, Industry, and People. These projects significantly enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors in the Lackawanna Heritage Valley.

The Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority Grants Program provides financial assistance to nonprofit and civic organizations, heritage attractions, and municipalities which are located or work within the geographic boundaries of the Lackawanna Heritage Valley, or whose projects will benefit LHVA's service area. This includes Lackawanna County and portions of Susquehanna, Wayne, and Luzerne Counties. Last year, LHVA awarded \$269,905 to local organizations to develop heritage, cultural, environmental, and community development projects.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the National Park Service (NPS) are LHVA's major funders. LHVA is grateful to U.S. Senators Robert P. Casey and Arlen Specter, Representative Paul Kanjorski, as well as our Pennsylvania legislators, Senator Robert Mellow, Representatives Ed Staback, Jim Wansacz, Frank Shimkus and Ken Smith for their strong and steadfast support and technical assistance.

LHVA has five primary funding goals based on LHVA's "Plan for the Lackawanna Heritage Valley" (1991), its "Management Action Plan and Environmental Impact Study" (2004), its Core Commitments and the priorities of DCNR and NPS. Grant awards are based on the guidelines required by DCNR and NPS, and must meet one or more of the following goals:

1. Community and Economic Development. Heritage tourism complements community development initiatives. Tourism is an engine for economic development. LHVA works to enhance the visitor experience in collaboration with our historic and cultural sites, as well as the Lackawanna County Convention and Visitors Bureau. The heritage of the Lackawanna Valley, replete with authentic remnants of its industrial past, rich ethnic traditions, magnificent architecture and natural beauty, diverse cultural and recreational activities, not to mention its current fame as the home of "The Office," has made it an increasingly popular destination for tourism.

2. Partnerships. One of the great attributes of the Lackawanna Valley is its sense of community. LHVA funds and fosters partnerships with local communities, nonprofit organizations, cultural and historic attractions, public officials, business and civic leaders, planners, educators, preservationists, conservationists, and private citizens. These mutually beneficial collaborations facilitate projects that have positive impacts on the community, and strengthen the capacity of the partnering organizations.

3. Cultural Conservation, Historic Preservation, and Local Heritage. In simple terms, LHVA's mission is to "tell our

story." LHVA supports historic preservation, adaptive reuse of older buildings, and reinvestment in neglected areas that represent unique aspects of our history. Projects such as trolley and rail car restoration, feasibility studies for heritage sites/attractions, exhibit design and fabrication, interpretation planning, ethnic festivals, and oral history projects have been funded as means to celebrate and preserve our sense of place.

4. Environmental Conservation/Renewal, Recreation, and Open Space. The Lackawanna Heritage Valley has a wonderful natural environment. Despite decades of neglect and industrial harm, the Lackawanna River is becoming a unique aesthetic, environmental, and recreational asset in the Lackawanna Heritage Valley. Another key goal of LHVA is to "connect people to the river." Thus, LHVA supports Rails-to-Trails planning and implementation projects, environmental education programs, and open space plans.

5. Interpretation and Place-Based Education. LHVA was designated as a national heritage area in recognition of its significance as an industrial complex that fueled the nation with anthracite coal. The coal was mined locally and transported to the great cities by the many railroads that carried it on tracks built with Scranton iron. The wives and daughters of these miners and railmen worked in the textile factories that manufactured much of the nation's lace and silk. The tensions between the owners of these industries and their workers gave birth to the modern labor movement. LHVA supports educational and interpretive programs that help the public understand relate to the significance of the area's industrial and cultural past as well as to the role that natural resources played in shaping its social mores. This is accomplished through interpretive exhibits, curriculum guides, documentary videos, educational DVD development, heritage-based continuing-education for teachers, and in-classroom programming.

LHVA offers three levels of funding support. Sponsorship grants fund projects and events up to \$1,000. Community Challenge Grants support projects from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Major Partnership Request grants are for larger projects between \$5,000 and \$50,000. LHVA grants cover no more than fifty percent (50%) of direct project costs. A successful grant applicant must demonstrate a dollar-for-dollar match for all funds that are requested of LHVA. Matching funds indicate partnership and community support for a project.

At a recent grants workshop attended by over 75 individuals, LHVA announced that the deadline for filing an Intent-to-Apply form for Major Partnership Requests is December 28, 2007 at Noon. Please visit our website, www.LHVA.org for information regarding LHVA's various grant opportunities and deadlines. Applications and forms are available online.

Natalie Gelb Solfanelli is executive director of the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority. E-mail her at nsolfanelli@LHVA.org.